

# The Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter

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Welcome to the 30<sup>th</sup> Rickmansworth Dental Centre Newsletter. Thank you for your positive feedback on previous issues. If you have any comments on our newsletter or anything you would like to see in it, please let us know.

## Practice News



Welcome to our Autumn 2008 Newsletter. Endless weeks of cold, rainy, grey days - at least Summer is over now! Christmas and New Year are rapidly approaching and we hope we will all be able to keep smiling in these uncertain times.

Over the past few weeks at the Dental Centre, we have continued to invest in various pieces of new equipment (see below) and new dental materials, to ensure we continue to provide you with the best treatment possible.

Remember, if there is anything you would like to see at the practice or if there is any way we can make your visit more pleasant, please let us know and we will try to oblige.

## Dental Loupes



When you have your next visit with Adam, you may notice he's wearing some very natty glasses (see picture below - please note; that's not Adam's head or hand!).

These are dental loupes which magnify everything by 3 times and also provide a very bright light. So don't be nervous if you see



Adam wearing his loupes. He's not suddenly become a miner, it's so that he can see your mouth and teeth in much more detail.

## Mouth Cancer



Just a reminder that it is Mouth Cancer Action Week from 16<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2008.

Mouth cancer is a condition that can affect the lips, tongue, cheeks and throat. It kills one person every five hours in the UK and the number of new cases is rising faster than almost any other cancer. Look out for any changes including ulcers that haven't healed after three weeks, lumps, or any red or white patches in the mouth. If you have any concerns then visit us immediately.



Remember: **If in doubt, get checked out!** More information can be found online at [www.mouthcancer.org](http://www.mouthcancer.org).

## Recall Intervals



There have been various stories in The Press recently that you only have to attend the dentist once every two years for your routine check ups. This is incorrect and as often happens they have got their facts wrong. In 2004, The National Institute for Clinical Excellence produced guidelines on suggested recall intervals. Recommendations included recalls for under 18's to be between 3 and 12 months and for adults to be between 3 and 24 months. The length of interval is dependant on several factors, which we can discuss with you if you are concerned. We rarely give a recall interval of two years as we are not just keeping an eye on your teeth, but are also screening for oral cancers and other disorders.

## Christmas Opening



Please contact The Dental Centre for confirmation of our opening times during the Christmas and New Year period

Rest assured that if we are closed and you are having problems, there is an emergency service available. The emergency out-of-hours telephone number has changed to **0845 603 1409**. This is part of the NHS Direct service. Details can be found on the practice answer phone or online at [www.thedentalcentre.org](http://www.thedentalcentre.org).

## Dental Hygienist



Both our hygienists are still at the practice, helping patients keep their teeth and gums healthy. Imran is here all day Monday and Thursday. He now also does occasional Tuesdays. Santok, on reception, can inform you of these when booking an appointment. Donna is here one Saturday morning a month. There is information about hygienists and what they do on the back of this newsletter.

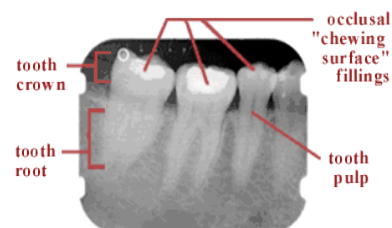
## Focus On Dental X-Rays



X-rays are a form of energy that travels in waves. X-rays can enter solid objects, where they either are absorbed or continue to pass through the object. The denser the material X-rays enter, the more they are absorbed and the less they are able to pass through.

Teeth and bone are very dense, so they absorb X-rays, but gums and cheeks are much less dense, so X-rays pass through more easily. That's why cheeks and gums

appear dark and without detail on the X-ray film, but teeth show up much lighter. And fillings, which are even denser than bone, will show up as a solid, bright white area. Dental caries (cavities) will show up on an X-ray as a darker patch in a light tooth.



X-ray images, also called dental radiographs, are among the most valuable tools a dentist has for keeping your mouth and teeth healthy. By understanding what the structures of the mouth look like normally on an X-ray film, dentists can diagnose problems in the teeth and jaws. For adults, radiographs can:

- Show areas of decay that the dentist may not be able to see with just a visual examination, such as tiny pits of decay that might occur between teeth
- Find decay that is developing underneath an existing filling
- Find cracks or other damage in an existing filling
- Alert the dentist to possible bone loss associated with periodontal (gum) disease
- Reveal problems in the root canal, such as infection or death of the nerve
- Help your dentist plan, prepare and place tooth implants, orthodontic treatments, dentures or other dental work
- Reveal other abnormalities such as cysts, cancer and changes associated with metabolic and systemic diseases (such as Paget's disease and lymphoma)

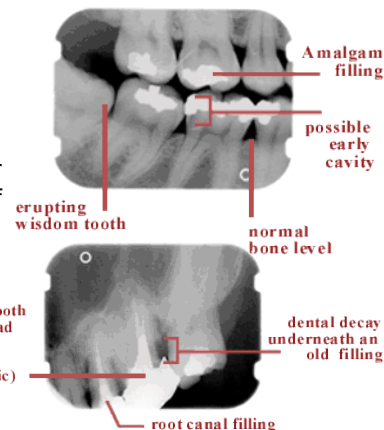
For children, radiographs are used to watch for decay and to monitor tooth growth and development. We can use X-rays to see whether there is space in the mouth to fit all the new teeth, whether primary teeth are being lost quickly enough to allow permanent teeth to erupt properly, whether extra (supernumerary)

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teeth are developing or whether any teeth are impacted (unable to emerge through the gums). Often, major problems can be prevented by catching small developmental problems early.

There are various types of radiographs. The two main types we use at The Dental Centre are:

- Bite-wing radiographs that highlight the crowns of the teeth. On each radiograph, the upper and lower teeth in one portion of the mouth are shown, from the crown to about the level of the jaw.
- Periapical radiographs highlight the entire tooth. On each radiograph, the teeth from either the upper or lower jaw in one portion of the mouth are shown. The difference from bitewings is that in a periapical X-ray, the whole tooth is shown, from the crown down past the end of the root to the part of the jaw where the tooth is anchored



Exactly how often x-rays are taken will depend on your medical and dental history and current condition. Some people may need X-rays as often as every six months. For others, X-rays may not be needed for as long as two years. In patients with no recent dental or gum disease and who visit the dentist regularly for check-ups, X-rays may be taken at even longer intervals.

All types of radiation can cause damage to body cells. The amount of radiation received from a dental x-ray is extremely small. We get more radiation from natural sources, including minerals in the soil, and from our general environment. With modern techniques and equipment, risks are kept to a minimum. However, Adam will always take care to use x-rays only when he needs to. We avoid routine dental X-rays on pregnant women until after they give birth. Although there is no proof that a routine dental X-ray could harm a developing baby, we usually suggest you wait to have your X-rays until after the baby is born. Delaying the X-ray for a few months will not result in further harm to teeth in most cases. There are times when the severity of the dental problem requires an X-ray to deal with an urgent concern.

### Visiting the Dental Hygienist

At The Dental Centre we have two dental hygienists. Imran is here on Mondays and Thursdays. Donna works one Saturday morning a month.

Listed below are a few of the most frequently asked questions about hygienists and what a visit to the hygienist involves.

#### What is a hygienist?

Dental hygienists are specially trained to work with the dentist in providing care tailored to the patients' needs.

They play an important role in dental health care and are mainly concerned with gum health, education in correct home care and the application of preventive materials to the teeth and gums.

The hygienist's provides professional cleaning of the teeth for the patient. Most importantly they educate the patient in the best way to keep the teeth free of plaque.

#### Why is this treatment important?

Regular professional cleaning combined with your home care will help maintain a healthy mouth. A clean and healthy mouth will improve your appearance, help you keep your teeth and give you fresh breath.

#### Can a hygienist help prevent dental disease?

The training of the hygienist is centred on preventing dental disease. Carefully removing the deposits that build up on the teeth and teaching you how to prevent it reforming again, will go a long way to slowing the progress of gum disease. Anti-bacterial gels and solutions can be applied under the gum to kill the bacteria causing gum disease. By discussing your diet and recommending other preventive measures your decay rate can also be reduced.

Children can benefit from having their teeth polished. The hygienist can also apply fluoride gels and solutions to help prevent decay. The permanent back teeth can also benefit from having the fissures sealed.

#### Why doesn't the dentist do this work?

Dr. Deitsch can carry out this type of work. However, the hygienist has also been specially trained to carry out scaling and polishing and can spend longer with you. They are also expert at teaching you how to look after your teeth and gums. Often the hygienist will spend a number of appointments getting the gums healthy ready for the dentist to do the more complex treatment.

#### Will the treatment hurt?

Scaling and polishing is usually pain-free. However, if you do experience some discomfort the hygienist can eliminate this with the use of topical anaesthetic creams or by giving you some local anaesthetic. It is important that you let the hygienist know at the time so that some pain control can be given.

#### What can I do to help the Hygienist?

You can do a great deal to help yourself and the hygienist as you are in control of your mouth between visits to the practice.

The hygienist will have shown you how to remove plaque with a toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. You will also have been shown how to clean between your teeth with floss, tape or little brushes. There are many products now available and the hygienist will recommend those that are appropriate for you.

#### Do I need to see the hygienist?

Following your routine examination Dr. Deitsch will advise you if you require a visit to the hygienist. If you feel you wish to see the hygienist anyway, please contact the surgery and this can be arranged for you.

If you have any queries or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.



*Hope you have a healthy Autumn.  
With Best Wishes from Adam Deitsch and all the staff at The Dental Centre. Don't forget you can find us online at [www.thedentalcentre.org](http://www.thedentalcentre.org)*

